

Analytical Reviewers,
W. Johnson's St Paul, Ch. Y^o

SERMON

FOR

THE 19TH DAY OF DECEMBER, 1797,

BEING THE DAY APPOINTED FOR A

General Thanksgiving to Almighty God,

FOR THE

SIGNAL VICTORIES

OBTAINED BY HIS MAJESTY'S ARMS,

In Three great NAVAL ENGAGEMENTS, over the respective
Belligerent Powers, united against this Country.

By the REV. L. H. HALLORAN,

CHAPLAIN IN THE ROYAL NAVY.

[Price ONE SHILLING.]

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are to be appropriated to the Fund, for the Relief of the
Seamen's Widows and Orphans.*

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TO
SIR JOHN COLPOYS, K. B.
VICE-ADMIRAL OF THE BLUE,
AS A TRIBUTE OF ESTEEM AND VENERATION,
TO HIS EMINENT PROFESSIONAL MERITS,
AND THE CONSUMMATE BENEVOLENCE AND
HUMANITY OF HIS CHARACTER,

THIS DISCOURSE

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY HIS OBLIGED AND

FAITHFUL HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

NO

SIR JOHN COLBOY, K. B.

VICE-ADMIRAL OF THE BLUE

AS A TESTIMONY OF RESPECT AND VENERATION

TO HIS EMINENT PROFESSIONAL MERITS

AND THE CONSUMMATE BENEVOLENCE AND

HUMANITY OF HIS CHARACTER

THIS DISCOURSE

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY HIS OBLIGED AND

WORTHY HUMBLE SERVANT

THE AUTHOR

A SERMON,

Ec. Ec.

*In the 20th Chapter of the 2nd Book of Chronicles,
and at the 13th Verse, it is thus written:*

“ BE NOT AFRAID OR DISMAYED BY REASON OF
“ THIS GREAT MULTITUDE, FOR THE BATTLE
“ IS NOT YOURS, BUT GOD’S!”

THE certainty impressed upon our
minds by the Christian Revelation,
“ That this world, and all its various
inhabitants are under the immediate and
continual superintendence of an infinitely
wise, and good, and powerful Being,” is

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one of the most consolatory reflections which our religion furnishes; and in all situations of danger or difficulty, it is a conviction, which must afford to the serious Christian, the firmest and most satisfactory basis of comfort and confidence!

This observation naturally arises from the words of my text, and from the circumstances which gave occasion for them.

The Children of Israel were selected by God, from among the nations of the earth, as his chosen people; and were distinguished, through many successive ages, by the most striking instances of his peculiar favor and protection! We are, however, expressly assured, that this pre-eminence was not the effect of their superior piety or virtue; for they frequently did evil in the sight of the Lord, and were

as repeatedly, in punishment of their offences, fold into the hands of the nations that surrounded them, and harassed with bloody and incessant hostilities by the neighbouring States. Yet still the arm of the Almighty was visibly extended for their protection; and though his *Justice* occasionally afflicted, his *Mercy* never forsook them! It was during the reign of one of their most pious and exemplary Princes, that an immense host, collected from three powerful and hostile nations, invaded their country, and spread terror and dismay, as the harbingers of their approach! Under these circumstances of danger, their monarch presented himself and his people before the Mercy Seat of God; and after acknowledging the many signal deliverances which He had wrought for them, and expressing their gratitude for

the *past*, and their entire dependance upon Him for the *future*, they implored the continued protection of his providence in their impending extremity. The Lord heard their prayers, and inspired one of his prophets to pronounce to them the encouraging exhortation conveyed in my text—"Be not afraid or dismayed by reason of this great multitude, for the battle is not *yours*, but *God's*!"

You have, I doubt not, anticipated the analogy I would infer between the Children of Israel, and the people of this land. I presume not to say, indeed, that we have absolutely been chosen from the nations of the earth as the favored or peculiar people of God, however his singular mercies to us might support the conclusion. But I affirm, that if we may judge of causes from their effects, and if repeated deliver-
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ance from danger be a proof of the Divine regard, no nation on earth has been more eminently favored—I might say, miraculously protected, than the inhabitants of this island have been, through a long series of ages, and amid a formidable assemblage of successive perils, to which human wisdom, courage, or policy, had been opposed in vain.

Without reverting to the more distant æra of our national history, when Armadas, presumptuously styled *Invincible*, were overthrown by forces so very inferior, “that the battle was evidently not *ours*, but *God’s* ;”—without presenting a retrospect of the brilliant successes over hostile nations, united for our destruction, which the annals of the present century record, and which, to every mind that admits the Divine superintendence, exemplify

plify in the strongest manner the favor of Providence;—I shall call your attention only to more recent deliverances, of which ourselves have personally partaken; which must therefore be deeply inscribed on our memories by the finger of gratitude—and which we are this day assembled to acknowledge and commemorate by public praises and thanksgivings to their Almighty Author!

It may be inquired by some fastidious objector, and I therefore pause to repel the implied censure, “whether the religion of Christ, who is emphatically styled the *Prince of Peace*, permits his disciples to rejoice in sanguinary successes, and victories, purchased by the reciprocal destruction of his creatures?” I reply, that wars are permitted by God as temporal chastisements of human wickedness—that how-
ever

ever repugnant to the mild and pacific spirit of the Gospel, they appear to be evils as inherent in the constitution of kingdoms and empires, as sickness and disease are in the human frame; and that, however we may deprecate their consequences, we are authorised, by repeated precedents in sacred history, as well as stimulated by the natural impulse of gratitude, to rejoice in the intimation of Divine favor and protection, which victory over our enemies conveys. As long as human pride or prejudice, policy or ambition, continues to operate—that is, as long as human nature and human passions exist as they are, and have been from the earliest times, so long will the evils consequent upon their indulgence continue to afflict mankind; and to *chastise*, though they cannot correct, the passions which
produce

produce them. There cannot, therefore, be any principle adverse to the spirit of the Gospel in the present oblation of our praises and thanksgivings to the supreme Governor of the Universe.— We rejoice not, *that wars exist*,—but that, since in the system of his Providence they are permitted to disturb the world, and to include our native country in their destructive vortex, the ruin and devastation, which would attend their nearer approach, have been repelled from the bosom of our land by the victories, with which he has mercifully favoured its gallant defenders.

But to return from this digression to the subject more immediately before us. It has pleased the Almighty, in his justice, to afflict this country with the scourge of war, and to render the various nations engaged in this sanguinary contest the vic-
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tims and the instruments of mutual and severe inflictions. It falls not within the scope of my present design, nor indeed is this the proper place, to discuss the much-agitated question of aggression: neither does my plan include an investigation of the inquiry, "why the God of Mercy should thus subject the beauties of creation, and the happiness and existence of his creatures, to be destroyed by the horrors and desolation of war?" His scheme of Providence is unfathomable by the limited line of human understanding; and our weak attempts to unfold its mazes would be equally futile and presumptuous. It suffices for us to know, that all his dispensations are regulated by infinite mercy and justice, under the guidance of unerring wisdom; and thence to infer, that the convulsions, which distract and

agitate the globe, have an undoubted tendency to wise and salutary purposes; and that his judgements are in the earth, that the inhabitants of the world may learn righteousness.

But the Almighty ever tempers his punishments with compassion, and in his judgements remembers mercy! Our national offences have incurred his displeasure, and provoked the evils of war; for undoubtedly, large is the fund of iniquity in our land, which challenges Divine infliction! But though the seeds of virtue be overgrown, and choked with tares—though *vice* predominates, and *piety* languishes, still does our soil produce eminent, though rare shoots of virtue, which avert severer judgements, and intercede for our deliverance. Still does our country, though degenerated from former integrity,

tegrity, exhibit a few shining lights—a small number of righteous men—for whose sake the incumbent destruction is suspended, and the uplifted arm of justice arrested in its descent.—And we may reasonably presume, that as the sins of the *wicked* have cried for vengeance, the prayers of the upright have invoked mercy—that as the one have brought down the scourge of war, the other have induced the alleviation of victory: and that, when the former shall, by our reformation, be diminished, and the latter proportionably increased, every danger will vanish—every threatening cloud disperse—and peace, and happiness, and security, return to bless our land. Fortunate will it be for each of us individually, as well as for the nation in general, if this conviction produce the blessed effect of re-

forming our morals, and restoring to our practice the antiquated virtues of temperance and justice—of piety towards God, and universal benevolence to man.

Deploring, as every feeling Christian must deplore, the calamities of war, we are not required by our religion to succumb under the attacks of our foes, or to be insensible to the advantages of victory over them. Such insensibility would prove us undeserving of it; for though *humanity* may claim the tear of compassion for the fate of the victims to war's direful ravages, *gratitude* must mingle with it the aspiration of acknowledgement to God for his visible protection in the day of battle! We have, in the course of the present contest, experienced, on three several occasions, as many manifest significations, that God is on our side; and if we receive his

mercy

mercy with thanksgiving, and evince our gratitude by the fervor of our piety, we may reasonably confide in his continued protection, and in his final discomfiture of the mighty combination, and the formidable armaments, by which our foes are meditating to invade our land, and to subvert our constitution, our religion, and laws.

There are persons who, unwilling to recognize the finger of Providence directing these events, and blindly attributing all our successes to secondary causes alone, ascribe not the glory of victory to God, but to the superior skill and experience of our commanders, and the prowess and conduct of our officers and men!—No man is more ready to pay homage to the merit and ability of an *Howe*, a *Jervis*, or a *Duncan*, or to the gallantry and undaunted bravery of British Seamen, than I
am;

am ; and that these have had their natural tendency to turn the scale of conquest in our favour, cannot be denied. But I need not labor to convince a Christian assembly, that great and meritorious as have been their exertions, eminent as are their skill and conduct, and unquestionable their valor, the battle has not been *theirs*, but *God's* !—*His* providence directs every, the minutest event, and without his favor and protection, the mightiest human force is as chaff before the wind ; and the most consummate skill and wisdom are incompetent to achieve their purpose. To *Him* then be ascribed the glory and the praise ! And though to the illustrious instruments, by whom our security and preservation have been ascertained, the national gratitude and esteem be justly due, yet should our first and warmest address be to our

Almighty

Almighty Leader, who has been our shield and buckler, the rock of our salvation and our defence !

And as the victories, which our arms have obtained, may be considered as auspices of the Divine favor and protection, and as such demand our praises and thanksgivings to the GREAT BESTOWER OF ALL VICTORY, so do they afford a comfortable ground of hope and confidence, that he will still preserve and defend us from future danger ; and dissipate the deepening gloom which gathers upon the prospect before us, and frowns from the opposite shores of the ocean upon our menaced coasts. A mighty and inveterate foe prepares to pour upon our land, hitherto secluded by its happy insular situation from the horrors which have overspread the greater part of Europe, numberless

berless hordes of cruel ravagers, breathing ruin and revenge—drunk with short-lived success—animated by the spirit of revolutionary phrenzy, and the barbarous hope of plunder and destruction!—But let us not be afraid or dismayed, “for the battle is not *ours*, but *God’s*!” We are not indeed to expect his miraculous interposition, if we ourselves neglect the means of defence, with which he has furnished us: but we have the best reasons to hope, that our exertions, directed by prudence and patriotism, and conducted by valor and perseverance, will be seconded and prospered by his merciful co-operation, and will recoil on our impious foes the threatened destruction.—Yes, my brethren, the glorious victories, which the whole nation, on this day, is joyfully assembled to commemorate with impassioned gratitude,
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and for which we have now offered the humble tribute of praise and adoration to God, are, let us confide, but the prelude to that greater and final deliverance, by which he will frustrate the malice of our vindictive foes, and restore to his people the blessings of security and peace !

As *men*, you can want no incentive to a gallant defence of your parents, your relatives, your wives, and your little ones ! As *Britons*, you will maintain the glorious privilege of this distinguished nation, liberty without *licentiousness*, against the frantic advocates of *licentiousness* without liberty or *security*. You will duly appreciate and defend the blessings you enjoy, nor be seduced to hazard known and experienced advantages for visionary and impracticable theories, engendered in the feverish brains of *slaves*

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become

become *tyrants*; and inebriated by the short-lived fumes of transient domination! Happy under the benign government of a mild and religious Prince;—subject to just and impartial laws, which dispense the only rational equality, in the administration of equal justice to the noble and the peasant;—protected in your persons and properties against the invasion of power, or the depredations of rapine;—enjoying the happiness of the pure, and tolerant religion of Christ;—you will surely (if you duly estimate these blessings, if you feel as men, and as *Britons* ought to feel) despise every personal risque, and defend, with your lives and fortunes, such precious advantages; and which are exclusively peculiar to this favored land! They have been purchased by the toil of ages! The fabric of civil and religious liberty, which constitutes

constitutes the glory and happiness of this country, was reared by your ancestors, cemented by their blood, and transmitted as a sacred deposit to you, to be entailed unimpaired upon your children's children! In its defence our fleets have fought, have vanquished, have triumphed!—And our present thanksgivings to God are less for the victories themselves, than for their happy consequences, in the security of this invaluable inheritance!

If we take a short review of the momentous events, which have occurred within the grasp of a few years on the theatre of Europe,—and in which this nation has borne a prominent share;—though numerous calamities, inseparable from a state of warfare, darken the projecting scenes with shades of misfortune, we shall discover the back ground, bright-

ened by the rays of success, and illumined by the sunbeams of victory. We shall find, “that though our foes have involved us in a portion of the mischiefs, their headlong phrenzy has created;—though the storm, which the breath of discord raised, has shaken the British oak, and bowed, by a momentary depression, its honors to the dust,—still glory and security have arisen from our afflictions;—the root of our national strength remains firm and immovable; and its branches have budded with fresh, and more lively foliage! The retrospect therefore affords us less subject of regret, than the passing scenes, and the perspective before us must excite motives of courage, and confidence, by the triumphs which they present, and the ultimate success they promise.

The adverse nations, who conspire our
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ruin, paralysed, and exhausted by the contest, are now collecting their utmost strength, and centering it in a point, for the avowed purpose of a last, and desperate effort against the vitals of our land! Their onset, like the force exerted in the delirium of a fever, may be violent, but cannot be either long, or successful, when combated by the cool, and deliberate valor of a strong and healthful community, directed by the counsels of prudence and wisdom—supported by a good cause, and the favor of Heaven—and animated by considerations, which might invigorate the most feeble, and inspire the most pusillanimous with courage! Let us not then be impelled by any unmanly apprehensions, to shrink from this last, though formidable assay, which must wrest a conclusion to our labors, and a happy issue to
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the disasters of war! But let us cheerfully come forward at the trying hour, which approaches, and rallying round the standard of our beloved sovereign, and our constitution, oppose to the fury of our invaders, either our persons, if requisite, or such other resources for defence, as our situations admit, and as the wisdom of our Legislature may require! And while we remember, "that the battle is not *ours*, but *God's*," let us blend with our thanksgivings for his *past*, our earnest supplications for his *future* protection; and our unfeigned endeavours to merit it, by uniting with an ardent gratitude, a genuine amelioration of our lives.

I cannot dismiss the interesting subject, on which I address you, without advert-
ing to the mournful situation of the *many*,
whose domestic comfort and happiness
have

have been the sacrifice to our late victory; and who mingle with the national triumph the bitter tear of individual anguish ! The successes we commemorate, and to which we perhaps owe our present existence as a nation, and our exemption from miseries, too dreadful for description, have been purchased, alas ! by the blood of numbers of our brave, devoted countrymen ;—who, while *we* have reposed securely in the bosom of domestic felicity, have been exposed in our defence to the perils of a cruel element, and to adversaries still more cruel—torn from their dearest connections—their parents, their wives, and children,—and at last, have purchased with their blood and wounds, the security we enjoy, and the victories in which we rejoice—leaving their hapless partners, desolate widows—their children, friendless orphans !

orphans!—And have not these a forcible, an imperious claim on the compassion, and liberality of *those*, for whose defence their happiness has been sacrificed, their dearest connections dissolved? They have;—and the generous hearts of Britons, ever prompt to meet the appeal of distress, have anticipated their claim by a voluntary and beneficent patronage! Let the spirit, which has inspired this act of humanity, of justice, pervade every corner of the kingdom; and as the surest test of gratitude for the blessing of victory, be the benevolent hand of relief extended by each of us, proportionably to our means, to the unfortunate, the disconsolate victims, whose wreck of happiness has confirmed our safety and preservation! Your benevolence cannot embrace a more worthy call!—Your valiant countrymen, when
 life

life was ebbing fast in your defence, regardless of themselves, turned their expiring eyes to you, soliciting, by the silent eloquence of their sufferings, that protection for *their* families, which their blood has purchased for *yours*. Your breasts, feelingly alive to every tender impulse, will not, *cannot*, resist the pathetic appeal! They knew it—their honest hearts reposed with confidence on *British* generosity—and that soothing confidence diffused the faint gleam of consolation over their dying countenances! You will not be unfaithful to their hopes. To you they have committed their parents, their wives, their infants; who, deprived of their support, must, without the aid of their country, languish in adversity and indigence! The voice of humanity and justice—the tears of the bereaved families—the last

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breath

breath of your brave, expiring defenders, emphatically invoke your compassion and benevolence!—They cannot invoke it in vain!—The debt of gratitude, we owe to them, shall be paid to their surviving, afflicted families: and from the present instance of our justice and munificence, future defenders of our land will be animated with tenfold enthusiasm; and will glory to be the champions of a great, and generous nation, who know how to appreciate and reward their services.

May the God of all consolation—the Spirit of eternal comfort, sooth and alleviate the affliction of the unfortunate families, who have suffered on the late occasion!—May He receive the souls of those brave warriors, whom his providence has permitted to fall, to the bosom of his mercy!—May he be a father to
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their orphans, and the defence and refuge of their widows!—May his Almighty arm continue to defend our land against every enemy!—And may *we*, by our zealous advancement in piety, and all godliness, deserve to enjoy from his bounty, the blessings of peace, and prosperity in the present life, and the reversion of eternal glory, and happiness, in the Kingdom of his Saints. *Amen.*

FINIS.

